General Assembly

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Seventieth session
Agenda item 132

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 1 April 2016

[*on the report of the Fifth Committee (A/70/649/Add.1)*]

70/255. Progress towards an accountability system in the United Nations Secretariat

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 59/272 of 23 December 2004 and 60/254 of 8 May 2006, section I of its resolution 60/260 of 8 May 2006 and its resolutions 60/283 of 7 July 2006, 61/245 of 22 December 2006, 63/276 of 7 April 2009, 64/259 of 29 March 2010, 66/257 of 9 April 2012, 67/253 of 12 April 2013, 68/264 of 9 April 2014 and 69/272 of 2 April 2015,

Reaffirming its commitment to strengthening accountability in the United Nations Secretariat and the accountability of the Secretary-General for the performance of the Secretariat to all Member States,

Emphasizing that accountability is a central pillar of effective and efficient management that requires attention and strong commitment at all levels of the Secretariat, especially at the highest level,

Recognizing and reaffirming the important role of the oversight bodies in the development of an accountability system that is relevant to the United Nations,

Having considered the fifth progress report of the Secretary-General on the accountability system in the United Nations Secretariat[1] and the related report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions,[2]

1. *Takes note* of the fifth progress report of the Secretary-General on the accountability system in the United Nations Secretariat;[1]

2. *Endorses* the conclusions and recommendations contained in the report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions,[2] subject to the provisions of the present resolution;

[1] A/70/668.
[2] A/70/770.

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Monitoring and oversight mechanisms

3. *Stresses* the indispensable roles of external and internal oversight mechanisms, carried out through regular audit reviews and the issuance of pertinent recommendations, and that the full and timely implementation of the recommendations of oversight bodies, which are aimed at strengthening the performance of managers in monitoring the activities for which they are held accountable, is an essential part of any effective system of accountability;

Anti-fraud framework

4. *Reaffirms* that the zero-tolerance approach to fraudulent acts and corruption, to be included in the anti-fraud framework, is indispensable for the strengthening of accountability at all levels, and requests the Secretary-General to ensure its timely implementation and to provide an update in the context of the sixth progress report on the accountability system in the United Nations Secretariat;

5. *Recalls* paragraph 10 of the report of the Advisory Committee, and stresses that a single agreed definition, across the United Nations system, of what constitutes fraud and suspected or presumptive fraud, is essential in order to develop effective counter-fraud policies to ensure compatibility and comparability of related data across entities and to improve overall transparency;

Policy against retaliation

6. *Notes with concern* the delay in the revision of the policy against retaliation following the external expert review in 2014, urges the Secretary-General to finalize, without further delay, the revision of the policy against retaliation, which should be separate and distinct from mechanisms for handling staff grievances and interpersonal disputes and provide protection for whistle-blowers, and requests the Secretary-General to present the outcome in the sixth progress report;

Implementation of resolutions of the General Assembly

7. *Requests* the Secretary-General to include information on the status of the implementation of relevant General Assembly resolutions on administrative and budgetary matters, in the context of the individual reports on matters that are addressed in the corresponding agenda items, and also requests the Secretary-General to ensure that comprehensive information on the implementation of such resolutions is contained in the biennial programme performance report;

8. *Takes note* of paragraph 18 of the report of the Advisory Committee;

Results-based management

9. *Reaffirms* that results-based management and performance reporting are essential pillars of a comprehensive accountability framework;

10. *Recognizes* the importance of results-based management and the need to strengthen the capacity of the Secretariat for programme monitoring and reporting, and requests an update on measures taken in the context of the sixth progress report;

11. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue his efforts to accelerate the implementation of the results-based management framework throughout the Secretariat in a phased manner, taking into account the provisions of paragraph 6 of its resolution 67/253;

12. *Reiterates its request* to the Secretary-General to include in the sixth progress report a detailed plan, with a fixed time frame and clear milestones, for the implementation of results-based management as part of the regular functioning of the Organization;

Enterprise risk management

13. *Welcomes* the progress made in establishing risk management framework tools with a view to improving institutional and personal accountability in the United Nations, and stresses the importance of ensuring that the culture of accountability is embedded, mainstreamed and continuously promoted throughout the Organization at all levels;

14. *Notes* that the phased implementation of the enterprise risk management system is ongoing in the peacekeeping missions, and requests the Secretary-General to make full use of the lessons learned throughout the field missions and to provide the General Assembly with updates in the context of the sixth progress report;

Evaluating outcomes

15. *Emphasizes* that a strong evaluation function continues to be a critical tool in assessing the performance of the Organization, through which accountability can be enhanced and lessons can be learned in order to achieve stronger results;

16. *Also emphasizes* that the evaluation function, in particular self-evaluation, is an essential managerial tool and that senior managers have a responsibility to use evaluation to improve performance;

17. *Reiterates its request* to the Secretary-General to take further, concrete measures to develop capacity for evaluation within the Secretariat programmes, with support provided by the Office of Internal Oversight Services of the Secretariat and external oversight bodies in terms of guidance and methodological advice;

18. *Recalls* that, in its resolution 70/247 of 23 December 2015, it approved specified resources, for the biennium 2016–2017, for monitoring and evaluation activities, covering mandatory self-assessments and discretionary self-evaluations;

Operationalizing and enforcing a credible personal and institutional accountability framework

19. *Requests* the Secretary-General to develop a clear, transparent and precise set of guidelines and parameters, aimed at defining areas of responsibility, in particular for senior managers, as well as non-compliance in respect of those areas of responsibility;

20. *Notes with appreciation* the continued inclusion in the senior managers' compacts of a managerial indicator related to the issuance of documentation to intergovernmental bodies and General Assembly committees, and requests the Secretary-General to ensure that it continues to be included in future compacts;

21. *Reiterates* that compacts and end-of-year assessments are unique accountability tools for senior managers and contribute to transparency in the Organization;

22. *Reiterates its requests* to the Secretary-General to take further concrete measures to ensure that the compacts system becomes a meaningful and powerful instrument of accountability, to take actions to address systemic issues that prevent managers from meeting their targets, in particular those related to compliance with

the recruitment timeline, and to report to the General Assembly on the progress achieved in this regard in the context of the sixth progress report;

23. *Requests* the Secretary-General to take a more strategic approach and concrete actions to implement the accountability framework and to include in the progress reports comprehensive and tangible assessments of actions, activities and progress made by the Secretariat;

24. *Also requests* the Secretary-General to continue to submit for its consideration an annual report on progress made towards the implementation of the accountability framework;

25. *Further requests* the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at the first part of its resumed seventy-first session on the implementation of the accountability framework, and decides to revert to the question of the frequency of future progress reports on accountability in the context of that report;

Strengthening accountability in field missions

26. *Encourages* the Secretary-General to continue efforts to strengthen accountability in all sectors of field missions and to ensure the full implementation of the zero-tolerance policy of the Organization regarding any kind of sexual exploitation and abuse, and looks forward to its consideration of the matter in the context of the next report on cross-cutting issues related to peacekeeping operations;

27. *Recognizes* the responsibility of troop-contributing countries to investigate allegations of misconduct involving members of military contingents, and also recognizes the responsibility of troop- and police-contributing countries to hold accountable those against whom allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse have been substantiated, in accordance with their national legislation.

90th plenary meeting
1 April 2016